



The Masonic Philatelist

A QUARTERLY
ISSN 1069-3580

VOL. 70

March 2014

No. 1



The Three Ruffians

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© March 2014

ISSN 1069-3580

LC# HE6187.M35

**Dr. Allan Boudreau
Editor & Publisher**

Open Letter3
The Three Ruffians4
Stamp Rant8
A Little View from '52 . . .16
**What is the Society of
Blue Friars17**
**How Did They Do Things
Back Then?18**

IMPORTANT

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Printed in the U.S.A
By Quiz Graphics Arts Inc.
Ord, Nebraska 68862

FOR YOUR INFORMATION

THE MASONIC PHILATELIST

Published quarterly by
The Masonic Stamp Club
of New York, Inc.

Regular meetings, 2:00 p.m., 2nd
Wednesday each month except
June, July and August at:

The Collectors Club
22 East 35th St.
NY, NY 10016-3806
U.S.A.
212-683-0559

WHERE TO WRITE

For information regarding
articles, manuscripts for
publication, new member
applications or renewals:

The Secretary
MSCNY

The Editor invites anyone
interested in Masonic Philately
to submit material for
publication. Camera ready copy
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Third Class postage paid at
Ord, NB 68862

POSTMASTER

Please send Address Changes to
MSCNY
22 East 35 St.
NY, NY 10016-3806
U.S.A.

Open Letter to Club Members

Brethren and Other Distinguished Club Members:

We have had a bit of a set-back. Our Editor and Publisher Dr. Allan Boudreau has suffered some health issues. He is fine and will soon be back with us producing our wonderful quarterly. However, for the time being (perhaps a few months) he will be unable to fulfill his regular duties.

It is for this reason that the March issue of our magazine is so late.

I have been asked to step in and help out during the time of his recovery. I certainly can't fill his shoes and provide all the news of up-coming events for the moment.

We had planned a new segment for the March 2014 issue, drawing upon my original revised work, *Facts, Fiction & Philately*, which I now call *Murphy's Stamp Rant*. The first installment is provided herewith.

I don't have any Masonic stamp news or stamp-related articles to publish at this time. So in order to provide some Masonic content, I would like to discuss an unusual subject—The Three Ruffians (as presented).

UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE, would you kindly direct all correspondence related to our quarterly publication to me. My e-mail is: <cmurphy101@shaw.ca>. My home address is:

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Canada

Fraternally,

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

The Three Ruffians

Christopher L. Murphy, BF

Without doubt, every Freemason vividly recalls that memorable evening when he was raised to the sublime degree of a Master Mason. Of course, he found it difficult to comprehend the full meaning of all the lectures and the remarkable ritual he underwent.



Naturally, those who choose to go through the chairs and become the lodge Master learned more and became more acquainted with the true meaning of the great “legend.” Many Masons, of course, undertake to do their own research without going through the chairs and are equally enlightened.

The central “experiences” in the ritual of the Third Degree are the actions of the three “ruffians.” Many of you, I am sure have played one or the other in the ritual. I recently decided to depict the ruffians in a sculpture, each with his respective “implement.” Here I will mention that not all rituals are alike. In my experience the implements were the twenty-four-inch gage, the square, and the setting maul.

The only implement that does not specifically teach a lesson in the various lectures is the setting maul. So the question might be, what would it teach? My answer here would be to respect the sanctity of life and the rights of others. Each of us figuratively holds a setting maul and how we use it determines our character in the eyes of the world. It was the setting maul that delivered the final blow.

The three ruffians don’t get a great amount of “press.” Indeed,

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.

all I can recall seeing of them is a painting in a book by Alan E. Roberts. Here we see them fleeing the scene of their evil deed—not quite right as I recall—our Grand Master Hiram Abiff was carried away and buried in the rubbish of the Temple.

The real Hiram Abiff, by the way, who worked on the Temple of Solomon, lived a long life and died of old age.

Our illustrious brethren who created our Third Degree Ritual evidently wanted someone who did exist to add a little credibility to the legend.



The Murder of Hiram by A. J. Knapp.

What is significant about the three ruffians is that they were trusted craftsmen. In other words, they were thought to be friends of Hiram, not enemies. In the ritual, they effectively represent greed, jealousy, and selfishness. Hiram was a highly honorable man, but this was no defense against treachery. The lesson here is that one's adversaries most often come from within, and resisting evil intentions can be extremely difficult. Hiram lost his life, but retained his honor.

After Hiram's body was taken by the ruffians to the hills and buried in a shallow grave, they attempted to leave the country, but were refused passage. This forced them to remain and they were eventually captured and brought to justice. The lesson here is that evil has no escape. It may take a very long time for righteousness to prevail and overcome, but it always does.

The search for the ruffians by King Solomon's men was not

The Masonic Philatelist

easy. Had not the ruffians left a clue, they may never have been found. We have to ask why they decided to leave a clue. Obviously it was a mistake, and herein lies the answer. Wrongdoing always leaves a clue of some sort that results in its downfall.

That the clue they left was of the type in the ritual was really quite ingenious on the part of those who created the ritual. The ruffians intended it to be an inconspicuous mark—something that nobody would notice. The only reason it became conspicuous is because one of King Solomon's men inadvertently took hold of it and noticed something strange. The odds that this would happen would be extremely remote, but life is like that, in other words, we just don't know what is going to happen.

The symbols in the sculpture/diorama I present are obvious to any Freemason. The ruffians show extreme anguish in their facial expressions as a result of their evil deed. The brass pillars, of course, are not of my making, and are simply for effect.

With art, it is always the thought that counts and this is simply an expression of the triumph of good over evil. As Masons recall their passage from the West to the East, they can't help but reflect on the influence of the three ruffians.



Announcing a New Stamp Collecting Topical Series for the *Masonic Philatelist*

For certain, most Club members are interested in both Masonic-related stamps and stamps in general. With this in mind, your Club has decided to branch out a little as to the material presented in our quarterly publication.

The question is, what aspect of stamp collecting would intrigue all stamp collectors? In other words, what is the “common denominator” with collectors regardless of their preferred specialty?

The answer is, **Errors, Oddities and Oversights** in postage stamp designs. Since the inception of postage stamps in the 1840s, human error, miss-information, and printing problems have plagued governments in the production of stamps. In some cases, such greatly increase the value of a stamp.

Over many years, Brother Murphy researched what he calls *Philatelic Curiosities* for US and Canadian stamps. Numerous articles he wrote in this connection were published by Scott. In 1991 Chris released his book, *Facts, Fiction and Philately, USA and Canada* (Pyramid Publications) which contained about 200 story entries. At this time, he has over 500.

The new series for our quarterly will be called ***Murphy's Stamp Rant: Errors, Oddities, & Oversights, USA & Canada.*** The first series presented will focus on stamp design anomalies, after which other categories will be considered.

Entries are in alphabetical order by the story title. The applicable Scott stamp number (or numbers) are shown at the end of the entry and are prefixed with the applicable country, colony or territory as follows:

BC	British Columbia	NB	New Brunswick
CDN	Canadian/Canada	NFD	Newfoundland
CS	Confederate States	NS	Nova Scotia
GB	Great Britain	USA	United States
HWI	Hawaii	OTHER:	Full Name

The first installment of ***Murphy's Stamp Rant*** follows.

The Masonic Stamp Club of New York, Inc.



Murphy's

STAMP RANT

Errors, Oddities & Oversights

USA & CANADA

Book One: Design Anomalies – Part 1

ABSENT WITHOUT LEAVE

George Rogers Clark originally captured Vincennes in August 1778, about six months prior to the year shown on the illustrated stamp. However, the British recaptured the fort in October of that year. Clark then again took the fort in February 1779. The stamp actually shows the surrender of Fort Sackville,



which is near the present site of Vincennes. There are amusing differences between the stamp and the actual painting, *The Fall of Fort Sackville*, by Frederick C. Yohn, from which the stamp was taken. Curiously, the third window to the right on the tower in the background of the stamp is not visible in the painting—there is a soldier standing in that exact spot. Furthermore, there are two other soldiers peering over the stockade wall who are also missing on the stamp. The following illustrations show the corresponding painting (left) and stamp (right) details. (USA #65)



AVIATION AGGRAVATION

This stamp commemorated the fiftieth anniversary of powered flight. Powered flight, however, had been around a lot longer than fifty years at that time (1953). The first steam-powered model airplane was successfully flown in 1848. What the stamp is actually commemorating is the fiftieth anniversary of manned powered flight. This event took place on December 17, 1903, (Wright brothers' flight). Incidentally, both air-planes shown on the stamp are flying in the same direction. The odd vertical block above the top wing on the design of the early plane is the plane's rudder.(USA # C47)



BAYONETS AND BONNETS

Each of these Civil War stamps shows a rifle or rifles with mounted bayonets. The first stamp (Shiloh) shows the correct type of Civil War bayonet, however, it is mounted on top of the barrel. This condition would make aiming the rifle difficult as the bayonet would block the front rifle sight. The second stamp (Gettysburg) shows the correct bayonet mounting for combat (under the rifle barrel), however, both bayonets are not the correct Civil War type. The third stamp (Appomattox) shows the correct type of bayonets but they are far too thick. Furthermore, the mounting of the bayonet on the center rifle is unusual. In order for the bayonet to be in a direct line with the rifle barrel as the stamp shows, the bayonet would have to be mounted sideways. The following stamp enlargement (left) illustrates this

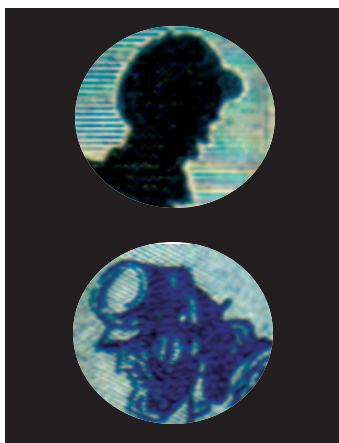


anomaly. An actual photograph of a young Union soldier with a rifle and mounted bayonet is shown on the right to illustrate exactly what Civil War bayonets looked like.



The bayonet side mounting shown in the photograph was probably for the benefit of the photograph. If the bayonet were mounted either beneath or on top of the rifle barrel, it would be hard to distinguish in the photograph.

The Appomattox stamp also appears to have a discrepancy regarding the soldier's head gear. The soldier shown is definitely a Union soldier so his cap should be the same as that of the Union soldier shown on the Gettysburg stamp. Just exactly what type of cap the Appomattox soldier is wearing is difficult to distinguish, other than a cub scout cap. Then again, we have to reason that as the soldier is remembering fallen soldiers, he should not be wearing a cap at all. The above detail enlargements



show the Appomattox Union soldier's cap (top) and the Gettysburg Union soldier's cap (lower). (*USA #1179, 1180, 1182*)

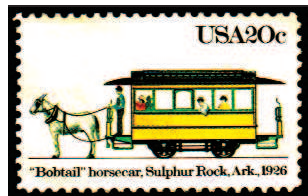
BEAVER BALONEY

This stamp shows an Indian woman drying beaver pelts on stretchers. The stamp was designed jointly by artists of the National Film Board and the Canadian Bank Note Company. As to the stamp design, we are told that in order to emphasize the activity to some extent, the beaver pelts are shown greatly enlarged. Just how large are the beaver pelts? An average beaver pelt would not exceed 24 inches in length. If we assume the Indian woman is about 5 feet 2 inches in height, then the beaver pelt on the ground closest to the woman is 44 inches long. This length is rather hard to rationalize as it is simply too great. It is surprising that the stamp designer did not do sufficient research for a more accurate portrayal of the pelts. (CDN #301)



BOBTAIL NAG

This stamp states that the streetcar shown is a bobtail horsecar. The horse shown, however, is not a “bob-tailed” horse. It could be that the following photograph detail was used in the design of the stamp. What appears to be the horse’s tail is the right leg of a man standing behind the horse. The horse is definitely a “bobtail.” (USA #2061)



BORDEN BOO-BOO

This stamp depicts Sir Robert Laird Borden, Prime Minister of Canada from 1911 to 1920. His name is shown on the stamp as Sir. R. L. Borden. When a person has a title, it is improper to show the title with initials. The title followed by full Christian names and last name is required—in this case, Sir Robert Laird Borden. (CDN #303)

**BOWIE BLUNDER**

The hunting knife shown on the illustrated stamp appears to be a bowie knife. This type of knife was invented by James Bowie (1799-1836). It is believed Bowie invented his knife in the 1830s, ten years or later after Daniel Boone had died (1820). Further, actual mass production of the knife did not commence until about 1840, at least twenty years after Boone's death. It is, therefore, highly unlikely Boone carved anything with a bowie knife. Finally, as the carving on the stamp does not show Boone's death year (1820), then the carving had to be made before that year. This fact rules out even Bowie himself as the carver. To justify the stamp design, we would have to assume that the bowie knife was stuck in the wall (added) at least ten years after the carving was made. The idea to use a wood carving theme for the stamp probably stems from a carving in a tree alleged to have been made by Boone. The carving shows just Boone's initials, DB. The tree section showing the initials resides in a Kentucky museum. The following illustrations show (left) an enlarged image of the stamp knife and (right) a bowie knife. (USA #1357)



Photo: Wikipedia Commons

BUNKER HILL BUNK

The Bunker Hill monument shown on this stamp was erected (1843) on Breed's Hill. Breed's Hill is now commonly considered a part of Bunker Hill which is in the same hill region. Ironically, the Battle of Bunker Hill took place on Breed's Hill. The following information is from the Encyclopedia Americana:



***BREED'S HILL, Mass.,** a slight elevation in the Charlestown district of Boston, about 700 yards from Bunker Hill. Although the famous engagement of June 17, 1775, is known as the Battle of Bunker Hill, the fighting was done on Breed's Hill. Here was located the American redoubt, against which the British made their three historic charges, and here Joseph Warren fell. Bunker Hill Monument stands on Breed's Hill.*

As the stamp shows the words, "Bunker Hill," and not "Bunker Hill Monument," the stamp is totally incorrect—the location depicted is not Bunker Hill. One last dig, John Trumbull, the famous American Revolution artist, calls Bunker Hill "Bunker's Hill," which is probably the correct name. (USA #1034)

COAT CHECK

The coat of arms on this stamp is shown as, "Arms of the London and Bristol Company for colonizing Newfoundland." This information is not correct. The coat of arms shown is that granted to the colony by Charles I in 1637. It appears the stamp designer obtained his information from a book written by the historian Prowse who used the wrong illustration in his work.



The postage stamp error was not discovered until Newfoundland officially adopted its coat of arms in 1928. The correct coat of arms is shown on a Canadian stamp issued in 1966. The detail from this stamp is shown on the left. (NFD #88, CDN #427)

COLUMBUS DISCOVERIES

A painting entitled, *Landing of Columbus*, by John Vanderlyn (1776-1852), was used for the design of this stamp. The stamp designer saw fit to exclude two members of the landing party directly behind Columbus. This exclusion is perfectly understandable as the crowd is a little too jammed-up for a postage stamp engraving. However, the two figures excluded appear to be holding standards (a spear and a Christian cross)



which are included in the stamp design. The missing men and their standards are identified on the adjacent detail from the painting. Note that you can see a hand holding the cross standard. The hand is likely that of the missing man on the right.

Vanderlyn's remarkable work is 12 feet by 18 feet. As such, it would be difficult to overlook any part of the painting. The adjacent details from the stamp show the areas of the missing men. The first detail shows the area of the missing man on the left. The second detail shows that of the missing man on the right.



Vanderlyn's painting was placed in the U.S. Capitol rotunda in 1847, five years before he died. (USA #231)

CONFEDERATION COMPLICATIONS

Canada celebrated its 50th Anniversary of Confederation with this postage stamp showing some of the Fathers of Confederation. The stamp was designed after a painting by Robert Harris that shows the Quebec Conference held in 1864. The stamp designer evidently had trouble with the wide and ornate left and right stamp borders as he cut off seven fathers on the right side of the stamp.



Fortunately, in 1927 (60th Anniversary of Confederation)



the stamp design was revised as shown here (left) to include all of the fathers in the painting. With this release, controversy raged because the stamp showed 34 delegates instead of 33, the correct number. No one, it appears, took the trouble to look at the painting key.

One of the figures shown is Hewitt Bernard who was the secretary for the conference. Bernard is the top left figure. This means that there were just 33 *fathers* shown in the painting and on the revised stamp. However, with regard to actual number, both the painting and the stamp are incorrect. Two fathers shown as present, William McDougall and Thomas D'Arcy McGee, definitely did not attend the Quebec conference. The illustration (right) shows the two absent but present delegates—William McDougall (left) and Thomas D'Arcy McGee (right). (CDN #135, 142)



The painting by Robert Harris. All that remains is a photograph as the original painting was destroyed in a fire.

A Little View From '52



Back in November 1952, the adjacent article was published in the *Masonic Philatelist*. The author, Brother John A. Mirt, was an eminent Masonic Philatelist and contributed a lot of material to our quarterly. Henry Dearborn, the subject of the article, is just seen on a previous stamp, *Surrender of General Burgoyne* (1927, #644). Dearborn is the second figure from the left. Please refer to the *Masonic Philatelist*, Vol. 56, No. 4 (December 2000) for the keys to people shown on group stamps. (USA #728)

TRAGEDY BEHIND A POSTAGE STAMP

It was just 140 years ago when tragedy struck what is now Chicago. Stationed at Fort Dearborn were 67 soldiers, under the command of Capt. Nathan Heald, and about 30 wives and children. Outside the stockade were encamped about 200 Potawatami braves. Word was received of the fall of the garrison at Mackinaw, Mich., leaving Chicago unprotected from Indians to the north and west. An order was given to abandon the fort. The party started out and was attacked by the Potawatamies. When the massacre had ended, only 27 whites remained alive; the fort was no more.

A reproduction of Fort Dearborn is pictured on a 1¢ stamp (U. S. No. 728) issued in 1933 in connection with Chicago's Century of Progress exposition. The stamp is of Masonic interest, the fort having been named after Maj. Gen. Henry Dearborn, who was made a Mason in St. John's Lodge, Portsmouth, N. H., in 1777. The builder and first commandant was Capt. John Whistler, a member of Nova Caesarea Lodge No. 10, Cincinnati, (now N. C. Harmony No. 2).—From Mirt's "Masonry on Postage Stamps."

Top Masonic-Related Stamp: The artwork on this Israel stamp is titled, "Let there be light." These four words are the pinnacle of Masonic tradition. There has not been a brother since the inception of the Masonic Order who does not remember them, and who would not be able to recall the exact circumstances of when he heard them in lodge. Perhaps this stamp should be displayed first in a Masonic collection—all alone on a black background. The country which originated the stamp could not be more appropriate or meaningful. (Israel, #298)





What is the Society of Blue Friars?

Both Dr. Allan Boudrea and Chris Murphy are members of this Masonic society. The following paper provides a complete explanation.

THE SOCIETY OF BLUE FRIARS (MASONIC AUTHORS)

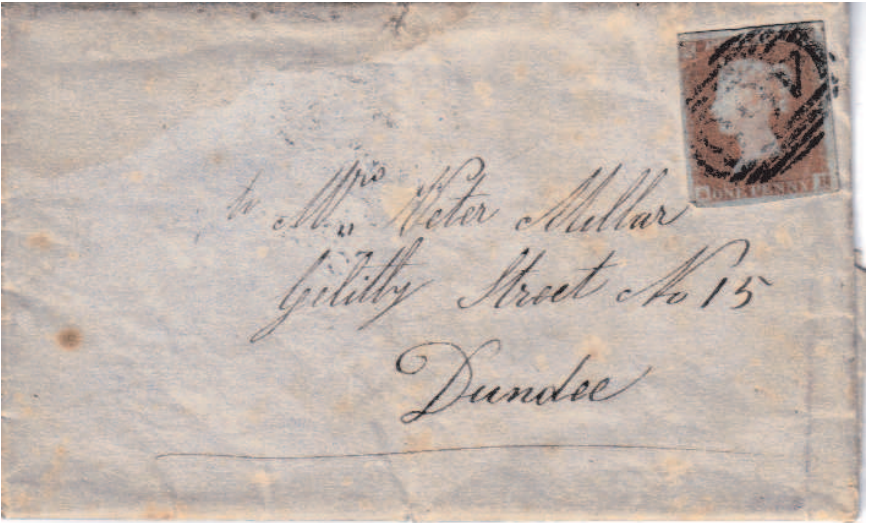
by Wallace McLeod

The Society of Blue Friars was formed in 1932, explicitly “to recognize Masonic Authors.” It is probably the smallest, and certainly one of the oddest, concordant bodies in Masonry. It has no fixed ritual or ceremonies, no dues or fees, and very few records. The name was chosen, presumably, because “Friar” is related to the French word for “Brother,” and is therefore appropriate for a Masonic group; but it would also call to mind the monks of the Middle Ages, the ones who wrote most of the books in those days. The regulations (at least in their present form) state that “One new Friar shall be appointed each year,” but that “additional Friars may be appointed to fill vacancies caused by demise or resignation when the total membership is not over twenty.”

Since 1944 the Society has met once a year (except for 1945), in a session that is open to all Masonic Brethren. The “Consistory” takes place in Washington, D.C., in February, as part of the annual Masonic weekend that is sponsored by the Allied Masonic Degrees. At the annual meeting, the new Friar is proclaimed, and is expected to deliver a research paper. In earlier times, the papers were sometimes printed in the Miscellanea of the Allied Masonic Degrees. In recent years they have appeared in *The Philalethes* magazine. Possibly the collected Blue Friar Lectures may be published at some time in the future

The Society has a short list of regulations. They tell us that there are three officers. The presiding officer is the Grand Abbot, who retains his office as long as he wishes, or as long as he lives. He appoints the Deputy Grand Abbot (who is his designated successor), and the Secretary-General. The Grand Abbot may receive nominations for new Friars, but the final decision as to who shall be selected rests entirely with him. There are neither dues nor fees. And the regulations can be changed only at the pleasure of the Grand Abbott. (Reference: <http://www.societyofbluefriars.org/information.html>).

How Did They Do Things Back Then?



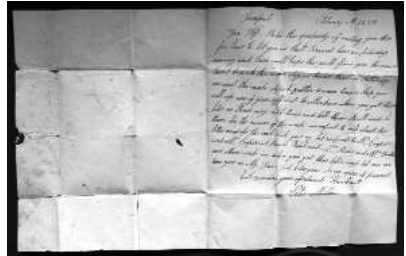
A year or so ago I found this little letter in an antique shop. What I show is the exact size, front and back. I naturally bought it because of the stamp. The letter contained inside was written on

February 9, 1850. It is simply a letter from a man touching bases with his wife while he was away on a business trip.

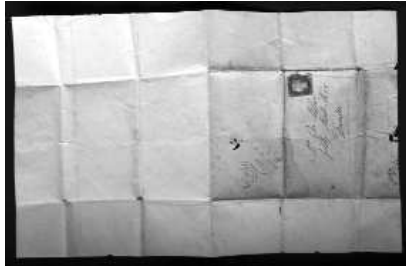
We all know that back in those days, letters formed their own envelopes. Now, I can vaguely recall either the nuns in my grade school or my mother showing me how to do this—make a combination letter/envelope. However, that was back in the 1940s, so I don't think instruction of this nature made it into the 1950s.

The other evening I had a good look at the letter, seen here, and noted what the writer did to make a nice neat letter/envelope.

First off, the letter paper is not small. It is about 14 inches by 9 inches. I show both sides of it here. In this case, the writer chose to just use the right side of the sheet. He could have used both sides, so there was plenty of room.



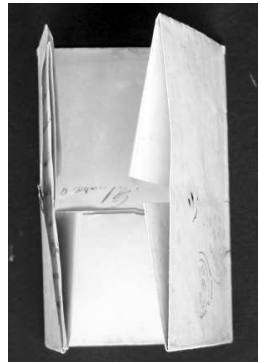
To make an envelope, the sheet was folded in half, then folded at the top and bottom, meeting in the center; then folded left and right, again meeting in the center. This results in the size of the letter as previously seen (about 3 inches by 4.5 inches).



Now, the crowning glory. In order to keep the letter folded, the right half was tucked into the left half. To make sure nobody opened the letter while in transit, it was sealed with a blob of wax (the black squarish shape seen in about the center of the second illustration, previous page, is wax).

I will venture a guess that this little trick has been around for a few hundred years. I will even guess that George Washington and Ben Franklin were taught how to do it, and got their grubby knuckles rapped if they did not do a nice neat job.

It still works, and now you know what to do if you run out of envelopes.



CLM

The *Masonic Philatelist* is a quarterly publication published by the Masonic Stamp Club of New York.

Masonic Philately is a postage stamp collecting speciality that concentrates on stamps which are, or may be, connected with the Masonic Order.



This 1939 US postage stamp showing the inauguration of George Washington (a Freemason) was petitioned by the Masonic Stamp Club of New York.

(The Club has an open membership policy.)